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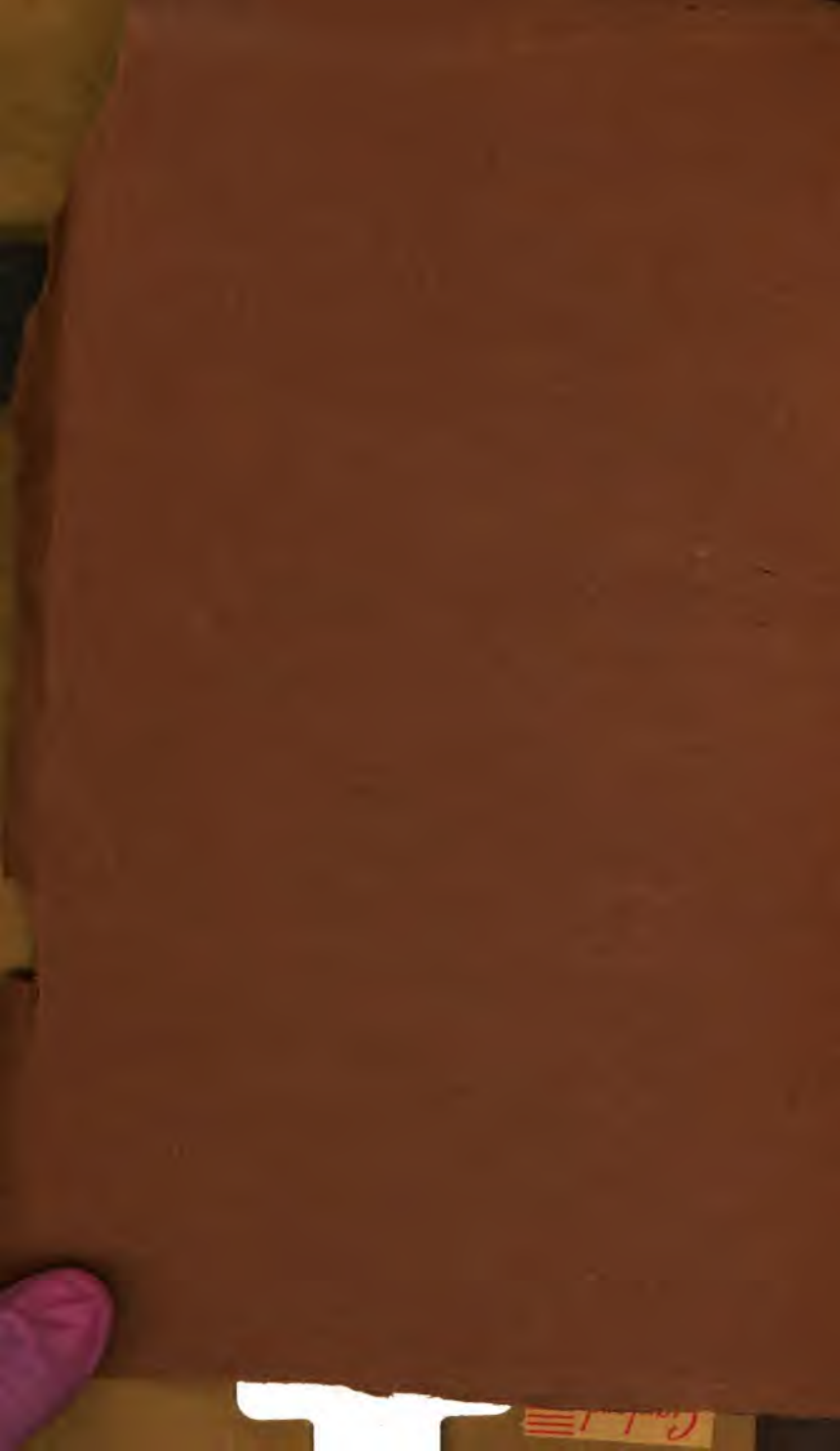
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THE LAND, A PLAY IN THREE  
ACTS, BY PADRAIC COLUM;  
BEING VOLUME III. OF THE  
ABBAY THEATRE SERIES  
(Second Edition.)



822.8  
C732  
1905

THE LAND.



**THE LAND. A PLAY IN THREE ACTS.**  
**BY PADRAIC COLUM.**

44

**DUBLIN: MAUNSEL & CO., LTD.,**  
**60, DAWSON STREET, 1905.**

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1905

*Second Edition.*

**I DEDICATE THIS PLAY TO MY FRIEND  
THOMAS H. KELLY OF NEW YORK.**

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## CHARACTERS.

**MURTAGH COSGAR**, a farmer.

**MATT**, his son.

**SALLY**, his daughter.

**MARTIN DOURAS**, a farmer.

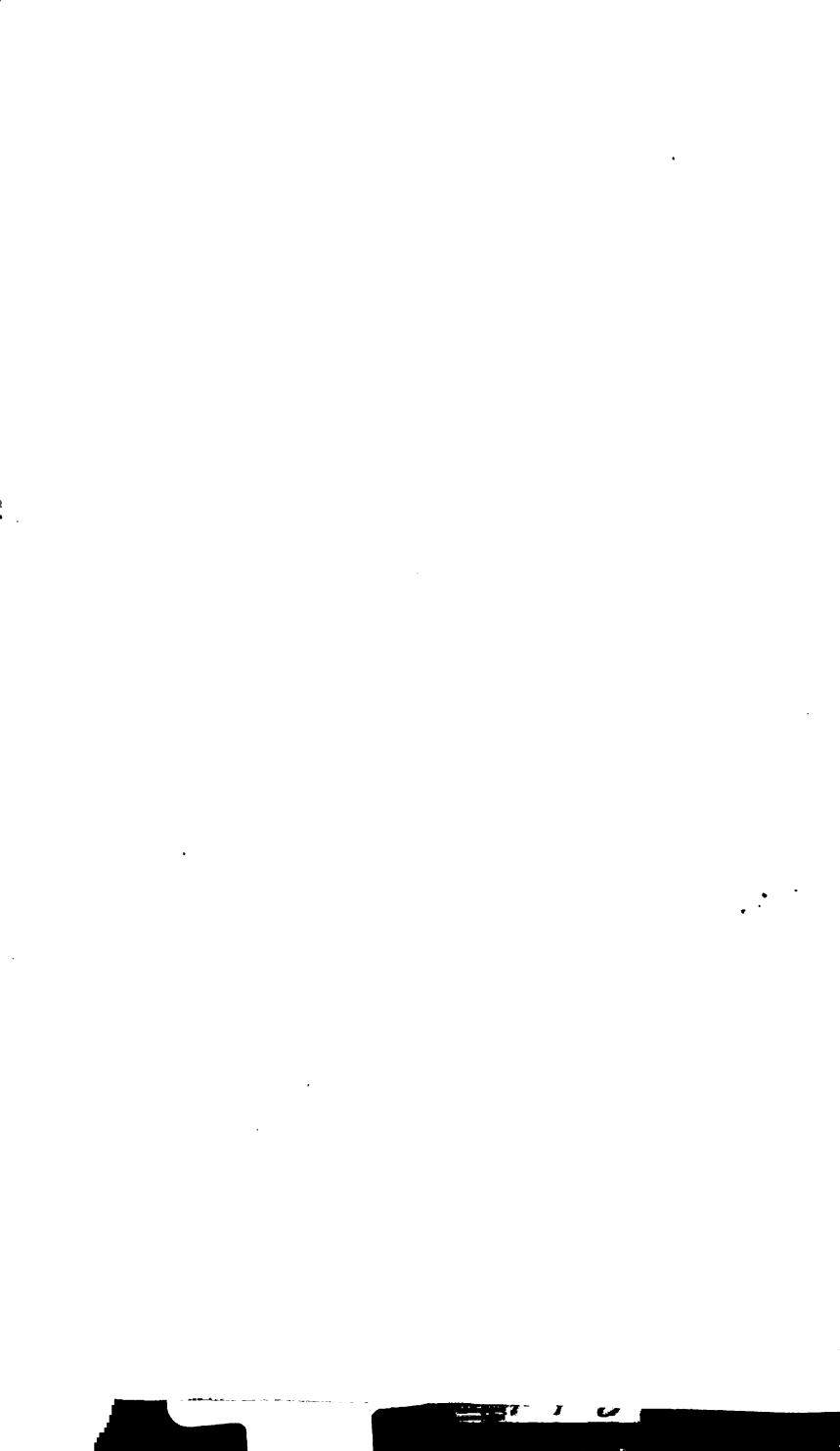
**CORNELIUS**, his son.

**ELLEN**, his daughter.

A group of men.

A group of boys and girls.

The scene is laid in the Irish Midlands, present time. The action is contemporary with the stage-presentation.



# THE LAND.

## ACT I.

*The interior of Murtagh Cosgar's. It is a large flagged kitchen. The entrance is at back right. The half-door is closed. There is a room-door a pace below the entrance, and below that a harness-rack. The fire-place occupies nearly the whole of the left. Another room-door above it. The dresser is at back, and a little window to the left of it. There is a bench outside, and a corner of it can be seen when the half-door is open.*

*It is the afternoon of a May day. Sally Cosgar is kneeling near the entrance chopping up cabbage-leaves with a kitchen-knife. She is a girl of twenty-five, dark, heavily-built, with the expression of a half-awakened creature. She is coarsely dressed, and has a sacking apron. She is quick at work, and rapid and impetuous in speech. She is talking to herself.*

*Sally.* Oh, you may go on grunting, yourself and your litter, it won't put me a bit past my own time. You oul' black baste of a sow, sure I'm slaving to

you all the spring. We'll be getting rid of yourself and your litter soon enough, and may the devil get you when we lose you.

*[Cornelius comes to the door. He is a tall young man with a slight stoop. His manners are solemn, and his expression somewhat vacant.]*

*Cornelius.* Good morrow, Sally. May you have the good of the day. *(He comes in.)*

*Sally (impetuously).* Ah, God reward you, Cornelius Douras, for coming in. I'm that busy keeping food to a sow and a litter of pigs that I couldn't get beyond the gate to see anyone.

*Cornelius (solemnly).* You're a good girl, Sally. You're not like some I know. There are girls in this parish who never put hands to a thing till evening, when the boys do be coming in. Then they begin to stir themselves the way they'll be thought busy and good about a house.

*Sally (pleased, and beginning to chop again with renewed energy).* Oh, it's true indeed for you, Cornelius. There are girls that be decking themselves, and sport-themselves, all day.

*Cornelius.* I may say that I come over to your father's, Murtagh Cosgar's house, this morning, thinking to meet the men.

*Sally.* What men, Cornelius Douras?

*Cornelius.* Them that are going to meet the landlord's people with an offer for the land. We're not buying ourselves, unfortunately, but this is a great day—the day of the redemption, my father calls it—

and I'd like to have some hand in the work if it was only to say a few words to the men.

*Sally.* It's a wonder, Martin, your father isn't on the one errand with you.

*Cornelius.* We came out together, but the priest stopped father and we on the road. Father Bartley wanted his advice, I suppose. Ah, it's a pity the men won't have someone like my father with them! He was in gaol for the cause. Besides, he's a well-discoursed man, and a reading man, and, moreover, a man with a classical knowledge of English, Latin, and the Hibernian vernacular.

*[Martin Douras comes in. He is a man of about sixty, with a refined, scholarly look. His manner is subdued and nervous. He has a stoop, and is clean-shaven.]*

*Cornelius.* I was just telling Sally here what a great day it is, father.

*Martin Douras.* Ay, it's a great day, no matter what our own troubles may be. I should be going home again. *(He takes a newspaper out of his pocket, and leaves it on the table.)*

*Cornelius.* Wait for the men, father.

*Martin Douras.* Maybe they'll be here soon. Is Murtagh in, Sally?

*[Cornelius takes the paper up, and begins to read it.]*

*Sally.* He's down at the bottoms, Martin.

*Martin Douras.* He's going to Arvach Fair, maybe.

*Sally.* He is in troth.

*Martin Douras.* I'll be asking him for a lift. He'll be going to the fair when he come back from the lawyer's, I suppose?

*Sally.* Ay, he'll be going to-night. (*She gathers the chopped cabbage into her apron, and goes to the door.*)

*Sally (at the door).* Cornelius!

[*Cornelius puts down the paper, and goes to the door. Sally goes out.*]

*Martin Douras.* Cornelius! (*Cornelius goes to Martin.*)

*Sally (outside).* Cornelius, give me a hand with this. (*Cornelius turns again.*)

*Martin Douras.* Cornelius, I want to speak to you. (*Cornelius goes to him.*)

*Martin Douras.* There is something on my mind, Cornelius.

*Cornelius.* What is it, father?

*Martin Douras.* It's about our Ellen. Father Bartley gave me news for her. "I've heard of a school that'll suit Ellen," says he. "It's in the County Leitrim."

*Cornelius.* If it was in Dublin itself, Ellen is qualified to take it on. And won't it be grand to have one of our family teaching in a school?

*Martin Douras (with a sigh).* I wouldn't stand in her way, Cornelius; I wouldn't stand in her way. But won't it be a poor thing for an old man like me to have no one to discourse with in the long evenings?

For when I'm talking with you, Cornelius, I feel like a boy who lends back all the marbles he's won, and plays again, just for the sake of the game.

*Cornelius.* We were in dread of Ellen going to America at one time, and then she went in for the school. Now Matt Cosgar may keep her from the school. Maybe we won't have to go further than this house to see Ellen.

*Martin Douras.* I'm hoping it'll be like that; but I'm in dread that Murtagh Cosgar will never agree to it. He's a hard man to deal with. Still Murtagh and myself will be on the long road to-night, and we might talk of it. I'm afeard of Ellen going.

*Cornelius (at the door).* It's herself that's coming here, father.

*Martin Douras.* Maybe she has heard the news and is coming to tell us.

[*Ellen comes in. She has a shawl over her head which she lays aside. She is about twenty-five, slightly built, nervous, emotional.*]

*Ellen.* Is it only ourselves that's here?

*Martin Douras.* Only ourselves. Did you get any news to bring you over, Ellen?

*Ellen.* No news. It was the shine of the day that brought me out; and I was thinking, too, of the girls that are going to America in the morning, and that made me restless.

[*Martin and Cornelius look significantly at each other.*]

*Martin Douras.* And did you see Matt, Ellen?

*Ellen.* He was in the field and I coming up; but I did not wait for him, as I don't want people to see us together. (*Restlessly*) I don't know how I can come into this house, for it's always like Murtagh Cosgar. There's nothing of Matt in it at all. If Matt would come away. There are little labourers' houses by the side of the road. Many's the farmer's son became a labourer for the sake of a woman he cared for!

*Cornelius.* And are you not thinking about the school at all, Ellen?

*Ellen.* I'll hear about it some time, I suppose.

*Martin Douras.* You're right to take it that way, Ellen. School doesn't mean scholarship now. Many's the time I'm telling Cornelius that a man farming the land, with a few books on his shelf and a few books in his head, has more of the scholar's life about him than the young fellows who do be teaching in schools and teaching in colleges.

*Cornelius.* That's all very well, father. School and scholarship isn't the one. But think of the word 'Constantinople'! I could leave off herding and digging every time I think on that word!

*Martin Douras.* Ah, it's a great word. A word like that would make you think for days. And there are many words like that.

*Ellen.* It's not so much the long words that we've to learn and teach now. When will you be home, father? Will Cornelius be with you?

*Martin Douras.* Ellen, I have news for you.

There's a school in Leitrim that Father Bartley can let you have.

*Ellen.* In Leitrim! Did you tell Matt about it?

*Martin Douras.* I did not.

[*Sally is heard calling "Cornelius." Cornelius goes to the door.*]

*Cornelius.* Here's Matt now. The benefit of the day to you, Matt.

[*He stands aside to let Matt enter. Matt Cosgar is a young peasant of about twenty-eight. He is handsome and well-built. He is dressed in a trousers, shirt, and coat, and has a felt hat on. Cornelius goes out.*]

*Matt (going to Ellen).* You're welcome, Ellen. Good morrow, Martin. It's a great day for the purchase, Martin.

*Martin Douras.* A great day, indeed, thank God.

*Matt.* Ah, it's a great thing to feel the ownership of the land, Martin.

*Martin Douras.* I don't doubt but it is.

*Matt.* Look at the young apple-trees, Ellen. Walking up this morning, I felt as glad of them as a young man would be glad of the sweetheart he saw coming towards him.

*Ellen.* Ay, there's great gladness and shine in the day.

*Matt.* It seems to trouble you.

*Ellen.* It does trouble me.

*Matt* Why?

*Ellen.* Everything seems to be saying, "There's something here, there's something going."

*Matt.* Ay, a day like this often makes you feel that way. It's a great day for the purchase though. How many years ought we to offer, Ellen?

*[Martin goes out. He sits on the bench outside.]*

*Ellen.* Twenty years, I suppose—(suddenly) Matt!

*Matt.* What is it, Ellen?

*Ellen.* I have got an offer of a school in the County Leitrim.

*Matt.* I wish they'd wait, Ellen. I wish they'd wait till I had something to offer you.

*Ellen.* I'm a long time waiting here, Matt.

*Matt.* Sure we're both young.

*Ellen.* This is summer now. There will be autumn in a month or two. The year will have gone by without bringing me anything.

*Matt.* He'll be letting me have my own way soon, my father will.

*Ellen.* Murtagh Cosgar never let a child of his have their own way.

*Matt.* When the land's bought out, he'll be easier to deal with.

*Ellen.* When he owns the land, he'll never let a son of his marry a girl without land or fortune.

*Matt.* Ellen, Ellen, I'd lose house and land for you. Sure you know that, Ellen. My brothers and sisters took their freedom. They went from this house and away to the ends of the world. Maybe I don't differ from them so much. But I've put my

work into the land, and I'm beginning to know the land. I won't lose it, Ellen. Neither will I lose you.

*Ellen.* O Matt, what's the land after all? Do you ever think of America? The streets, the shops, the throngs?

*Matt.* The land is better than that when you come to know it, Ellen.

*Ellen.* May be it is.

*Matt.* I've set my heart on a new house. Ay and he'll build one for us when he knows my mind.

*Ellen.* Do you think he'd build a new house for us, Matt? I could settle down if we were by ourselves. Maybe it's true that there are things stirring and we could begin a new life, even here.

*Matt.* We can, Ellen, we can. Hush! father's without.

*[Martin Douras and Murtagh Cosgar are heard exchanging greetings. Then Murtagh comes in, Martin behind him. Murtagh Cosgar is about sixty. He is a hard, strong man, seldom-spoken, but with a flow of words and some satirical power. He is still powerful, mentally and physically. He is clean-shaven, and wears a sleeved waistcoat, heavy boots, felt hat. He goes towards Ellen.]*

*Murtagh.* Good-morrow to you. (*Turning to Matt*) When I get speaking to that Sally again, she'll remember what I say. Giving cabbage to the pigs, and all the bad potatoes in the house. And I had to get up in the clouds of the night to turn the

cows out of the young meadow. No thought, no care about me. Let you take the harness outside and put a thong where there's a strain in it.

*[Murtagh goes to the fire. Matt goes to the harness rack. Martin Douras and Ellen are at the door.]*

*Martin Douras.* Ellen, I'll have news for you when I see you again. I've made up my mind to that.

*Ellen.* Are you going to the fair, father?

*Martin Douras.* Ay, with Murtagh.

*Ellen.* God be with you, father. *(She goes out.)*

*Martin Douras.* What purchase are you thinking of offering, Murtagh?

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Twenty years.

*Martin Douras.* It's fair enough. Oh, it's a great day for the country, no matter what our own troubles may be.

*[Matt has taken down the harness. He takes some of it up and goes out.]*

*Murtagh Cosgar (with some contempt).* It's a pity you haven't a share in the day after all.

*Martin Douras.* Ay, it's a pity indeed.

*[Murtagh goes to the door.]*

*Murtagh Cosgar (with suppressed enthusiasm).*  
From this day out we're planted in the soil.

*Martin Douras.* Ay, we're planted in the soil.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* God, it's a great day.

*[Cornelius comes back.]*

*Cornelius.* This is a memorial occasion, Murtagh Cosgar, and I wish you the felicitations of it. I met the delegates and I coming in, and I put myself at the head of them. It's the day of the redemption, Murtagh Cosgar. (*Murtagh, without speaking, goes up to the room left.*)

*Cornelius.* He's gone up to get the papers. Father, we must give the men understanding for this business. They must demand the mineral rights. Here they are. Men of Ballykillduff, I greet your entrance. (*Six men enter discussing.*)

*First Man.* We'll leave it to Murtagh Cosgar. Murtagh Cosgar isn't a grazier or a shopkeeper.

*Second Man.* It's the graziers and shopkeepers that are putting a business head on this.

*Third Man.* If we're all on the one offer, we can settle it at the lawyer's.

*Fourth Man.* Sure it's settled for twenty years on the first-term rents.

*Fifth Man.* There are some here that would let it go as high as twenty-three.

*Sixth Man.* What does Murtagh Cosgar say?

*Some of the men.* We'll take the word from him.

*Martin Douras.* He mentioned twenty years.

*Second Man.* Not as a limit, surely?

*Other Men.* We're not for any higher offer.

*Second Man.* Well, men, this is all I have to say. If you can get it for twenty, take it, and my blessing with it. But I want to be dealing with the Government, and not with landlords and agents. To have

a straight bargain between myself and the Government, I'd put it up to twenty-three, ay, up to twenty-five years' purchase.

*Third Man.* More power to you, Councillor. There's some sense in that.

*Sixth Man.* I'm with the Councillor.

*First Man.* It's all very well for graziers and shopkeepers to talk, but what about the small farmer?

*Fourth Man.* The small farmer. That's the man that goes under.

*Fifth Man (knocking at the table).* Murtagh Cosgar! Murtagh Cosgar!

*Cornelius.* I tell you, men, that Murtagh Cosgar is in agreement with myself. Twenty years, I say, first term, no more. Let my father speak.

*Martin Douras.* There's a great deal to be said on both sides, men.

*First Man.* Here's Murtagh now.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Twenty years, first term, that's what I agreed to.

*Second Man.* And if they don't rise to that, Murtagh?

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Let them wait. We can wait. I won't be going with you, men. I had a few words with the agent about the turbary this morning, and maybe you're better without me.

*First Man.* All right, Murtagh. We can wait.

*Fourth Man.* We know our own power now.

*Fifth Man.* Come on, men.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* If they don't rise to it, bide a while. We can make a new offer.

*Second Man.* We want to be settled by the Fall.

*Third Man.* The Councillor is right. We must be settled by the Fall.

*Sixth Man.* A man who's a farmer only has little sense for a business like this.

*Second Man.* We'll make the offer, Murtagh Cosgar, and bide a while. But we must be settled this side of the Fall.

*Sixth Man.* We'll offer twenty years first term.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Do, and God speed you.

*Cornelius (to the men going out).* I told you Murtagh Cosgar and myself are on the one offer. And Murtagh is right again when he says that you can bide your time. But make sure of the mineral rights, men ; make sure of the mineral rights.

*[The men go out ; Cornelius follows them.]*

*Murtagh Cosgar (with savage irony).* Musha, but that's a well-discoursed lad. It must be great to hear the two of you at it.

*Martin Douras.* God be good to Cornelius. There's little of the world's harm in the boy.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* He and my Sally would make a great match of it. She's a bright one, too.

*Martin Douras.* Murtagh Cosgar, have you no feeling for your own flesh and blood ?

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Too much feeling, maybe. *(He stands at the door in silence.) (With sudden enthusiasm)* Ah, but that's the sight to fill one's

THE LAND.

Lands ploughed and spread. And all  
all our own.

*Martin Douras.* All our own, ay. But we made a  
fight for them.

*Martin Douras.* Ay.  
ever see them as we're seeing them now.

*Murtagh Cosgar (turning round).* Them that come after us  
and isn't it a great thing that we're able to pass this  
land on to them, and it redeemed for ever? Ay, and  
their manhood spared the shame that our manhood  
knew. Standing in the rain with our hats off to let  
landlord—ay, or a landlord's dog-boy—pass the way!

*Martin Douras (mournfully).* May it be our own  
generation that will be in it. Ay, but the young are  
going fast; the young are going fast.

*Murtagh Cosgar (sternly).* Some of them are no  
loss.

*Martin Douras.* Ten of your own children went,  
*Murtagh Cosgar.*

*Murtagh Cosgar.* I never think of them. When  
they went from my control, they went from me  
altogether. There's the more for Matt.

*Martin Douras (moistening his mouth, and  
beginning very nervously).* Ay, Matt. Matt's a good  
lad.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* There's little fear of him leaving  
now.

*Martin Douras (nervously).* Maybe, maybe. But,

mind you, Murtagh Cosgar, there are things—little things, mind you. Leastways, what we call little things. And, after all, who are we to judge whether a thing—

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Is there anything on your mind, Martin Douras?

*Martin Douras (hurriedly).* No; oh, no. I was thinking—I was thinking, maybe you'd give me a lift towards Arvach, if you'd be going that way this night.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Ay, why not?

*Martin Douras.* And we could talk about the land, and about Matt, too. Wouldn't it be a heartbreak if any of our children went—because of a thing we might—

*Murtagh Cosgrave (fiercely).* What have you to say about Matt?

*Martin Douras (stammering).* Nothing, except in a—in what you might call a general way. There's many a young man left house and land for the sake of some woman, Murtagh Cosgar.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* There's many a fool did it.

*Martin Douras (going to door).* Ay, maybe; maybe. I'll be going now, Murtagh.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Stop! (*clutching him*). You know about Matt. What woman is he thinking of?

*Martin Douras (frightened).* We'll talk about it again, Murtagh. I said I'd be back.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* We'll talk about it now. Who's she? What name has she?

## THE LAND.

*Martin Douras (breaking from him and speaking with sudden dignity).* It's a good name, Murtagh Cosgar; it's my own name.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Your daughter! Ellen! You're—  
*Martin Douras.* Ay, a good name, and a good girl.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* And do you think a son of mine would marry a daughter of yours?

*Martin Douras.* What great difference is between us, after all?

*Murtagh Cosgar (fiercely).* The daughter of a man who'd be sitting over his fire reading his paper, and the clouds above his potatoes, and the cows trampling his oats. (*Martin is beaten down.*) Do you know me at all, Martin Douras? I came out of a little house by the roadway and built my house on a hill. I had many children. Coming home in the long evenings, or kneeling still when the prayers would be over, I'd have my dreams. A son in Aughnalee, a son in Ballybrian, a son in Dunmore, a son of mine with a shop, a son of mine saying Mass in Killnalee. And I have a living name—a name in flesh and blood.

*Martin Douras.* God help you, Murtagh Cosgar. But I've a son still. It's not your daughter he'll be marrying. (*He strides to the door and calls Matt.*)

*Martin Douras (going to him).* Murtagh Cosgar—we're both old men, Murtagh Cosgar. for God's sake—

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You've read many stories, Martin Douras, and you know many endings. You'll see an

ending now, and it will be a strong ending, and a sudden ending.

[*Matt comes to the door, holding the harness in his arms.*

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You're wanted here.

*Matt.* I heard you call (*coming down*). So they're sticking to the twenty years.

*Martin Douras (eagerly).* Twenty years, Matt, and they'll get it for twenty. O, it's a great day for you both! Father and son, you come into a single inheritance. What the father wins the son wields.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* What the father wins, the son wastes.

*Matt.* What's the talk of father and son.

*Martin Douras.* They're the one flesh and blood. There's no more strife between them than between the right hand and the left hand.

*Murtagh Cosgar (to Matt).* We were talking about you. We were fixing a match for you.

*Matt (startled, looking at Martin Douras).* Fixing a match for me?

*Murtagh Cosgar (softly).* Ay, Matt. Don't you think it's time to be making a match for you?

*Matt (sullenly, going to the door).* Maybe it is. When you have chosen the woman, call. I'll be without.

*Murtagh Cosgar (softly, going to him).* We haven't chosen yet. But it won't be Martin Douras' daughter, anyhow.

*Matt.* Stop. You drove all your living children

away, except Sally and myself. You think Sally and myself are the one sort.

*Murtagh Cosgar* (tauntingly). Martin's daughter Corney's sister. That's the girl for you!

*Matt*. We're not the one sort, I tell you. Martin Douras, isn't he a foolish old man that would drive all his children from him. What would his twenty years' purchase be to him then?

*Murtagh Cosgar*. It wasn't for my children I worked. No, no; thank God; it wasn't for my children I worked. Go, if you will. I can be alone.

*Martin Douras*. O Murtagh, Murtagh, sure you know you can't be alone. We're two old men, Murtagh.

*Murtagh Cosgar*. He daren't go.

*Matt*. Because I'm the last of them he thinks he can dare me like that.

*Murtagh Cosgar*. There was more of my blood in the others.

*Matt*. Do you say that?

*Martin Douras*. Don't say it again. For God's sake, don't say it again, Murtagh.

*Murtagh Cosgar*. I do say it again. Them who dared to go had more of my blood in them!

*Matt*. Ah, you have put me to it now, and I'm glad, glad. A little house, a bit of land. Do you think they could keep me here?

*Murtagh Cosgar* (to Martin Douras). It's his own way he wants. I never had my own way. (To Matt).

You're my last son. You're too young to know the hardship there was in rearing you.

*Matt (exultantly).* Your last son ; that won't keep me here. I'm the last of my name, but that won't keep me here. I leave you your lands, your twenty years' purchase. Murtagh Cosgar, Murtagh Cosgar ! isn't that a great name, Martin Douras—a name that's well planted, a name for generations ? Isn't he a lucky man that has a name for generations ? (*He goes out.*)

*Murtagh Cosgar.* He can't go. How could he go and he the last of the name. Close the door, I say.

*Martin Douras.* He'll go to Ellen, surely. We'll lose both of them. Murtagh Cosgar, God comfort you and me.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Ellen ; who's Ellen ? Ay, that daughter of yours. They're a nice pair, a nice pair. Close the door, I say.

[*Martin Douras closes the door and comes down to Murtagh Cosgar.*]

CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

*Interior of Martin Douras'. The entrance is at back left. There is a dresser against wall back ; a table down from dresser ; room doors right and left. The fireplace is below the room door right ; there are stools and chairs about it. There is a little bookcase left of the dresser, and a mirror beside it. There are cups and saucers on table, and a tea-pot beside fire. It is afternoon still. Ellen Douras is near the fire reading. Cornelius comes in slowly.*

*Cornelius.* I left the men down the road a bit. We ought to take great pride out of this day, Ellen. Father did more than any of them to bring it about.

*Ellen.* He suffered more than any of them. And it's little we'll get out of the day.

*Cornelius.* It's a great thing to have prophesied it, even. We'll be here to see a great change.

*Ellen.* There will be no change to make things better !

*Cornelius.* Will you be taking that school, Ellen?

*Ellen.* I'll wait a while.

[*Sally coming in ; she is hurried.*]

*Sally (breathlessly).* Oh, God save you, Cornelius. Tell me, is my father gone? I dread going back and he there! It was all over that baste of a sow that has kept me slaving all through the spring till I don't know whether greens or potatoes is the fittest for her!

*Cornelius.* He didn't go, Sally. I went down a bit of the road myself with the men.

*Sally.* Oh, God help me! And I'll have to be going back to boil meal for her now. How are you, Ellen. (*She goes to Ellen.*)

*Ellen.* Sit down for a while, Sally; it's a long time since I was speaking to you. (*Sally sits down beside Ellen.*)

*Cornelius.* I'll leave this paper where they won't be looking for pipe-lights. There are things in that paper I'd like to be saying. (*He takes a newspaper out of his pocket and goes to room right.*)

*Ellen (to Sally, who has been watching Cornelius).* Tell me, Sally, are they always that busy in your house? Is your father as harsh as they say?

*Sally.* Father 'ud keep us all working. He's a powerful great man.

*Ellen.* Matt will be bringing a wife into the house soon from all I hear. How would your father treat her?

*Sally.* Oh, he'd have his way, and she'd have her way, I suppose.

*Ellen.* And do you think your father will let him marry?

*Sally.* Sure he must if the boy likes.

*Ellen.* What would he say if Matt married a girl without a fortune?

*Sally.* In my mother's country there are lots of girls with fortunes that Matt could have.

*Ellen.* Supposing he wanted a girl that had no fortune?

*Sally.* Oh, I suppose, father would give in in the end. It wouldn't be clay against flint when Matt and father would be to it.

*Ellen.* You're a good girl, Sally. If I was Matt's wife, do you think you'd be fond of me?

*Sally.* I'd like you as well as another, Ellen.

[*Cornelius comes down from room.*]

*Cornelius.* I suppose they'll be here soon.

*Ellen.* I have tea ready for them.

*Sally.* Who's coming at all?

*Cornelius.* Some of the boys and girls that are for America. They are going to Gilroy's to-night, and are leaving from that in the morning. They are coming in to see Ellen on their way down.

*Sally.* There are a good many going this flight. The land never troubles them in America, and they can wear fine clothes, and be as free as the larks over the bogs. It's a wonder you never thought of going, Ellen.

*Ellen.* Father wouldn't like me to be far from him, and so I went in for the school instead.

*Sally.* And now you've got a fine boy like Matt. It was lucky for you to be staying here.

*Ellen.* Hush, Sally.

*Sally.* Oh, I knew all about it before you talked to me at all. Matt always goes to the place where he thinks you'd be.

*Ellen (rising).* I'll be in the room when the girls come, Cornelius. [*She goes into room left.*]

*Sally (going to Cornelius).* God help us, but she's the silent creature. Isn't it a wonder she's not filled with talk of him after seeing him to-day? But Ellen's right. We shouldn't be talking about men, nor thinking about them either; and that's the way to keep them on our hands on the long run. I'll be going myself. [*She goes towards door.*]

*Cornelius (going to her).* Don't be minding Ellen at all, Sally.

*Sally.* Well, as high as she is, and as mighty as she is, she came into his own house to see Matt. God between us and harm, Cornelius, maybe they'll be saying I came into your house to see you.

*Cornelius.* Who'll know you came at all? And what isn't seen won't be spoken of.

*Sally.* Would you like me to stay, Cornelius?

*Cornelius.* Ay, I would.

*Sally.* Divil mind the sow. (*They sit down together.*)

*Sally (after a pause).* Would you like me to knit you a pair of socks, Cornelius?

*Cornelius.* Oh, I would, Sally; I'd love to wear them.

*Sally.* I'll knit them. We'll be getting rid of the sow to-night, maybe, and I'll have time after that.

*Cornelius.* And you come along the road when I'm herding. I don't want to be going near your father's house.

*Sally.* O Cornelius, it won't be lucky for us when father hears about Ellen and Matt.

*Cornelius.* That's true. No man sees his house afire but looks to his rick.

*Sally.* Come down a bit of the road with me, Cornelius. The sow will be grunting and grunting, reminding father that I'm away. Och, a minute ago I was as contented as if there was no land or pigs, or harsh words to trouble one. (*She goes to the door.*) The boys and girls for America are coming here.

*Cornelius.* Give me your hands to hold, Sally. (*She gives him her hands.*) We are as young as any of them after all. (*They hold each other's hands, then stand apart.*)

*Sally.* It's a fine time for them to be going when the leaves are opening on the trees.

[*Three boys and three girls enter. They are dressed for going away.*]

*Sally.* God save you, girls. Good-bye, Cornelius. I'll have to run like a redshank. [*Sally goes out.*]

*Cornelius.* I'll call Ellen down to you. (*He goes to the room door and calls.*) I'm going herding myself. Herding is pleasant when you have thoughts with you. (*He takes up the rod and goes out.*)

[*The girls begin whispering, then chattering.*]

*First Girl.* Sure I know. Every night I'm dreaming of the sea and the great towns. Streets and streets of houses, and every street as crowded as the road outside the chapel when the people do be coming from Mass.

*First Boy.* I could watch the crowd in the street ; I would think it better than any sight I ever knew.

*Second Girl.* And the shops and the great houses.

*Second Boy.* There's no stir here. There's no fine clothes, nor fine manners, nor fine things to be seen.

*Third Boy.* There's no money. One could never get a shilling together here. In America there's money to have and to spend and to send home.

*Third Girl.* Every girl gets married in America. (*Ellen comes down.*)

*Ellen.* I'm glad you came. I have tea ready for you. I can't go to Gilroy's to-night.

[*Some come to the table and some remain near the door.*]

*A Girl (at table, to Ellen).* They say that a turf fire like that will seem very strange to us after America. Bridget wondered at it when she came back. "Do civilized people really cook at the like of them?" said she.

*A Boy.* It's the little houses with only three rooms in them that will seem strange. I'm beginning to wonder myself at their thatch and their mud walls.

*Another Girl.* Houses in bogs and fields. It was a heartbreak trying to keep them as we'd like to keep them.

*A Girl at door.* Ah, but I'll never forget Gortan and the little road to Aughnalee.

*Another Girl.* I think I'll be lonesome for a long time. I'll be thinking on my brothers and sisters. I nursed and minded all the little ones.

*First Boy.* A girl like you, Ellen, is foolish to be staying here.

*Second Boy.* She'll be coming in the Fall. We'll be glad to see you, Ellen.

*Ellen.* I have no friends in America.

*First Girl.* I have no friends there, either. But I'll get on. You could get on better than any of us, Ellen.

*Second Girl.* She's waiting for her school. It will be a little place by the side of a bog.

*Third Girl (going to Ellen).* There would be little change in that. And isn't it a life altogether different from this life that we have been longing for? To be doing other work, and to be meeting strange people. And instead of bare roads and market-towns, to be seeing streets, and crowds, and theatres.

*Ellen (passionately).* O what do you know about streets and theatres? You have only heard of them. They are finer than anything you could say. They are finer than anything you could think of, after a story, when you'd be young.

*A Girl.* You'll be going after all, Ellen.

*Ellen.* I won't be going

*First Girl.* Well, maybe you'll be down at Gilroy's. We must go now.

*[They rise, Ellen goes to the door with the girls, and they part.]*

*Ellen.* Theatres! What do they know of theatres? And it's their like will be enjoying them.

*[Sally comes back. She is more hurried than before.]*

*Sally.* Ellen! Ellen! I have wonders to tell. Where is Cornelius, at all? He's never here when you have wonders to tell.

*Ellen.* What have you to tell?

*Sally.* Oh, I don't know how I'll get it all out! Matt and father had an odious falling out, and it was about you. And Matt's going to America; and he's to bring you with him. And Cornelius was saying that if father found out about yourself and Matt—

*Ellen.* Sally, Sally, take breath, and tell it.

*Sally.* Matt is going to America, like the others, and he's taking you with him.

*Ellen.* Sally, Sally, is it the truth you're telling?

*Sally.* It is the truth. Honest as day, it is the truth.

*Ellen.* And I thought I'd be content with a new house. Now we can go away together. I can see what I longed to see. I have a chance of knowing what is in me. *(She takes Sally's hands.)* It's great news you've brought me. No one ever brought me such news before. Take this little cross. You won't have a chance of getting fond of me after all. *(She wears a cross at her throat; she breaks the string, and gives it to Sally.)*

*Sally.* I don't know why I was so fervent to tell you. There's the stool before me that myself and Cornelius were sitting on, and he saying—(*she goes to the door.*) Here's Matt! Now we'll hear all about it.

*Ellen.* So soon ; so soon. (*She goes to the mirror. After a pause, turning to Sally.*) Go down the road a bit, when he comes in. Sally, you have a simple mind ; you might be saying a prayer that it will be for the best.

*Sally (going to the door muttering).* Go down the road a bit! 'Deed and I will not till I know the whole ins and outs of it. Sure I'm as much concerned in it as herself! "No man sees his house afire but watches his rick," he was saying. Ah, there's few of them could think of as fine a thing as that. (*Matt comes in.*)

*Matt.* Well, Sally, were you home lately?

*Sally.* I was—leastways as far as the door. Father and oul' Martin were discoorsing.

*Matt.* I've given them something to discoorse about. Maybe you'll be treated better from this day, Sally.

*Sally.* O Matt, I'm sorry. (*She goes out.*)

*Matt (going to Ellen).* It happened at last, Ellen ; the height of the quarrel came.

*Ellen.* It was bound to come. I knew it would come, Matt.

*Matt.* He was a foolish man to put shame on me after all I did for the land.

*Ellen.* You had too much thought for the land.

*Matt.* I had in troth. The others went when there was less to be done. They could not stand him. Even the girls went away.

*Ellen.* There was the high spirit in the whole of you.

*Matt.* I showed it to him. "Stop," said I; "no more, or I fling lands and house and everything aside."

*Ellen.* You said that.

*Matt.* Ay. "Your other children went for less," said I; "do you think there's no blood in me at all?"

*Ellen.* What happened then?

*Matt.* "I'm your last son," I said; "keep your land and your twenty years' purchase. I'm with the others; and it's poor your land will leave you, and you without a son to bring down your name. A bit of land, a house," said I; "do you think these will keep me here?"

*Ellen.* I knew they could not keep you here, *Matt.* You have broken from them at last; and now the world is before us. Think of all that is before us—the sea, and the ships, the strange life, and the great cities.

*Matt.* Ay—there before us—if we like.

*Ellen.* Surely we like.

*Matt.* I was always shy of crowds. I'm simple, after all, *Ellen,* and have no thought beyond the land,

*Ellen.* You said that house and land could not keep you. You told him you were going as your brothers went.

*Matt.* And I felt I was going. I frightened him.

He'll be glad to see me back. It will be long before he treats me that way again.

*Ellen (suddenly).* Matt!

*Matt.* What is it, Ellen?

*Ellen.* I don't know—I was upset—thinking of the quarrel (*putting her hands on his shoulders*). My poor Matt. It was about me you quarrelled.

*Matt.* Ay, he spoke against you. I couldn't put up with that.

*Ellen.* He does not know your high spirit. He does not know your strength.

*Matt.* Ellen, it's no shame for a man to have harsh words said to him when it's about a woman like you.

*Ellen.* Let nothing come between us now. I saw you in the winter making drains and ditches, and it wet. It's a poor story, the life of a man on the land.

*Matt.* I had too much thought for the land.

*Ellen.* You had. Have thought for me now. There is no one in fair or market but would notice me. I was never a favourite. I lived to myself. I did not give my love about. You have never offered me anything. In the song a man offers towns to his sweetheart. You can offer me the sights of great towns, and the fine manners, and the fine life.

*Matt.* Ellen! (*He draws a little away.*) It's not me that could offer the like of that. I never had anything to my hand but a spade.

*Ellen.* Your brothers—think of them.

*Matt.* They all left someone behind them. I am the last of my name.

*Ellen.* Why should that keep you back?

*Matt.* His name is something to a man. Could you hear of your own name melting away without unease? And you are a woman. A man feels it more.

*Ellen.* I do not understand men. Will you go back to your father's house after he shaming you out of it?

*Matt.* He'll be glad to see me back. He'll never cast it up to me that I went.

*Ellen.* Matt, your father said words against me. Will you go to him and take his hand after that?

*Matt.* It was little he said against you. It was against your father he spoke.

*Ellen (sinking down on a chair, and putting her hands before her face).* My God! After all my waiting, you talk like that.

*Matt (going to her).* Ellen, Ellen, tell me what I can do for you? There's land and houses to be had here. Father will let me have my own way after this.

*Ellen (rising, with anger).* What does it matter to me whether he lets you have your own way or not? Do you think I could go into a farmer's house?

*Matt.* Ellen!

*Ellen.* It's a bad hand I'd make of a farmer's house. I'm not the sort to be in one. I'm not like Sally.

*Matt (getting angry).* Don't be talking that way, Ellen Douras.

*Ellen (with greater vehemence).* I must be talking

like this. If you take me, you will have to go from your father's house. I always knew it. You ought to know it now, Matt Cosgar.

*Matt.* You didn't know it always. And you have let someone come between us when you talk like that.

*Ellen.* I'm not one to be listening to what people say about you. Nor do I be talking in the markets about you.

*Matt.* I suppose not. You wouldn't have people think you gave any thought to me. I'm not good enough for you. The people you know are better.

*Ellen.* You are foolish to be talking like that. You are foolish, I say.

*Matt.* I know I am foolish. Fit only to be working in drains and ditches in the winter. That's what you think.

*Ellen.* Maybe it is.

*Matt.* Ellen Douras! Ellen Douras! A farmer's roof will be high enough for you some day.

*Ellen.* May I never see the day. Go back, go back. Make it up with your father. Your father will be glad of a labourer.

*Matt.* Maybe you won't be glad if I go back; thinking on what you've said.

*Ellen.* I said too much. We don't know each other at all. Go back. You have made your choice. *(She goes up to room left.)*

*Matt.* Very well, then. God above, am I to be treated everywhere like a heifer strayed into a patch

of oats? Neither man nor woman will make me put up with this any longer. (*Going to door.*) When Ellen Douras wants me, she knows the place to send to. (*He stands at door. There is no sound from room. Going back he speaks loudly.*) I'll be waiting two days or three days to hear from Ellen Douras.

[*There is no sound. Matt goes out. The room door is thrown open, and Ellen comes down.*

*Ellen (furiously).* Two days or three days he'll wait for me. As if I'd go into Murtagh Cosgar's house. As if I'd go into any farmer's house. As if I'd get married at all, and the world before me. Two days or three days you'll wait. Maybe it's lonesome, weary years you'll be waiting, Matt Cosgar.

CURTAIN.

### ACT III.

*Interior of Murtagh Cosgar's. It is towards sunset. Murtagh Cosgar is standing before the door looking out. Martin Douras is sitting at the fire in an arm-chair.*

*Martin Douras.* It's getting late, Murtagh Cosgar.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Ay, it's getting late.

*Martin Douras.* It's time for me to be going home. I should be seeing Ellen. (*He rises.*)

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Stay where you are (*turning round*). We're two old men, as you say. We should keep each other's company for a bit.

*Martin Douras.* I should be going home to see Ellen.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* If she's going, you can't stay her. Let you keep here.

*Martin Douras.* She'll be wondering what happened to me.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Divil a bit it will trouble her. You're going to the fair anyway?

*Martin Douras.* I have no heart to be going into a fair.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* It's myself used to have the

great heart. Driving in on my own side-car, and looking down on the crowd of them. It's twenty years since I took a sup of drink. Oh, we'll have drinking to-morrow that will soften the oul' skin of you. You'll be singing songs about the Trojans to charm every baste in the fair.

*Martin Douras.* We're both old men, Murtagh Cosgar.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* And is there any reason in your scholarship why oul' men should be dry men? Answer me that!

*Martin Douras.* I won't answer you at all, Murtagh Cosgar. There's no use in talking to you.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Put it down on a piece of paper that oul' men should have light hearts when their care is gone from them. They should be like—

*Martin Douras.* There's nothing in the world like men with their rearing gone from them, and they old. [*Sally comes to the door. She enters stealthily.*]

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Ha, here's one of the clutch home. Well, did you see that brother of yours?

*Sally.* I did. He'll be home soon, father.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* What's that you say? Were you talking to him? Did he say he'd be home?

*Sally.* I heard him say it, father.

*Martin Douras.* God bless you for the news, Sally.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* How could he go and be the last of them? Sure it would be against nature. Where did you see him, Sally?

*Sally.* At Martin Douras's, father.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* It's that Ellen Douras that's putting him up to all this. Don't you be said by her, Sally.

*Sally.* No, father.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You're a good girl, and if you haven't wit, you have sense. He'll be home soon, did you say?

*Sally.* He was coming home. He went round the long way, I'm thinking. Ellen Douras was vexed with him, father. She isn't going either, Matt says, but I'm thinking that you might as well try to keep a corncrake in the meadow for a whole winter, as to try to keep Ellen Douras in Aughnalee.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Make the place tidy for him to come into. He'll have no harsh words from me. *(He goes up to the room.)*

*Sally.* Father's surely getting ould.

*Martin Douras (sitting down).* He's gone up to rest himself, God help him. Sally, *a stor*, I'm that fluttered, I dread going into my own house.

*Sally.* I'll get ready now, and let you have a good supper before you go to the fair.

*Martin Douras.* Sit down near me, and let me hear everything, Sally. Was it Matt that told you, or were you talking to Ellen herself?

*Sally.* O, indeed, I had a talk with Ellen, but she won't give much of her mind away. It was Matt that was telling me. "Indeed she's not going," said he, "and a smart young fellow like myself thinking of

her. Ellen is too full of notions." Here's Matt himself. Father won't have a word to say to him. He's getting mild as he's getting ould, and maybe it's a fortune he'll be leaving to myself.

[*Matt comes to the door. He enters.*]

*Matt.* Where is he? He's not gone to the fair so early?

*Sally.* He's in the room.

*Matt.* Were you talking to him at all? Were you telling him you saw myself?

*Sally.* I was telling him that you were coming back.

*Matt.* How did he take it?

*Sally.* Very quiet. God help us all; I think father's losing his spirit.

*Matt (going to Martin).* Well, you see I've come back, Martin.

*Martin Douras.* Ay, you're a good lad. I always said you were a good lad.

*Matt.* How did father take it, Martin?

*Martin Douras.* Quietly, quietly. You saw Ellen?

*Matt.* Ay, I saw Ellen (*gloomily*). She shouldn't talk the way she talks, Martin. What she said keeps coming into my mind, and I'm troubled. God knows I've trouble enough on my head.

*Martin Douras (eagerly).* What did she say, Matt Cosgar?

*Matt.* It wasn't what she said. She has that school in her mind, I know.

*Martin Douras.* And is there anything to keep her here, Matt Cosgar?

*Matt.* I don't know that she thinks much of me now. We had a few words, but there's nothing in the world I put above Ellen Douras.

*Martin Douras.* I should be going to her.

*Matt.* Wait a bit, and I'll be going with you. Wait a bit. Let us talk it over. She wouldn't go from you, and you old.

*Martin Douras.* God forgive my age, if it would keep her here. Would I have my Ellen drawing turf, or minding a cow, or feeding pigs?

*Matt.* I'm fond of her, Martin. She couldn't go, and I so fond of her. What am I doing here? I should be making it up with her. What good will anything be if Ellen Douras goes? (*He turns to the door, then stops.*) I came to settle with him. I mustn't be running about like a frightened child.

[*The room-door opens, and Murtagh Cosgar is seen. Sally has hung a pot over the fire, and is cleaning the dishes at the dresser.*]

*Murtagh Cosgar (at the room-door).* Sally, it's time to be putting on the meal. If you have any cabbage left, put it through the meal. (*To Matt.*) You put the thong in the harness?

*Matt.* I did (*pause*). Well, I've come back to you.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You're welcome. We were making ready for the fair.

*Matt.* I'll be going out again before nightfall.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* I'll not be wanting you here, or at the fair.

*Matt (sullenly).* There's no good talking to me like that.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You said, "I've come back," and I said, "you're welcome." You said, "I'm going out again," and I said, "I'll not be wanting you."

*Matt.* Father, have you no feeling for me at all?

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Sure the wild raven on the tree has thought for her young.

*Matt.* Ay, but do you feel for me, and I standing here, trying to talk to you?

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You're my son, and so I feel sorry for you; and you beginning to know your own foolishness. (*He turns to Sally.*) I'm not taking the pigs. Put a fresh bedding under them to-night.

*Sally.* I will, father.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Be up early, and let the cows along the road, or they'll be breaking into the young meadow.

*Sally.* I'll do that, too.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Be sure to keep enough fresh milk for the young calf.

*Sally.* I'll be sure to do it, father.

[*She goes out. Martin takes out his paper, and begins to read it again.*]

*Matt (turning on Murtagh).* Before I go out again there's something I want settled.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* What is it you want?

*Matt.* Would you have me go, or would you have me stay?

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Don't be talking of going or staying, and you the last of them.

*Matt.* But I will be talking of it. You must treat me differently if you want me to stay. You must treat me differently to the way you treat Sally.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You were always treated differently, Matt. In no house that ever I remember was there a boy treated as well as you are treated here.

*Matt.* The houses that you remember are different from the houses that are now. Will you have me go, or will you have me stay?

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You're very threatening. I'd have you stay. For the sake of the name, I'd have you stay.

*Matt.* Let us take hands on it, then.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Wait, we'll see what you want first.

*Matt.* You have no feeling. I'd go out of this house, only I want to give you a chance.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Stop. We can have kindness in this. We needn't be beating each other down, like men at a fair.

*Matt.* We're not men at a fair. May God keep the kindness in our hearts. *[Martin rises.]*

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Don't be going, Martin Douras.

*Matt.* Don't be going yet. I'll be with you, when you're going. *[Martin sits down.]*

*Murtagh Cosgar (to Matt).* You'll be getting married, I suppose, if you stay?

*Matt.* Maybe I will.

*Murtagh Cosgar (bitterly).* In the houses that are

now, the young marry where they have a mind to. It's their own business, they say.

*Matt.* Maybe it is their own business. I'm going to marry Ellen Douras, if she'll have me.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Ellen is a good girl, and clever, I'm told. But I would not have you deal before you go into the fair.

*Matt.* I'm going to marry Ellen Douras.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Her father is here, and we can settle it now. What fortune will you be giving Ellen, Martin? That £100 that was saved while you were in Maryborough gaol? [*Martin shakes his head.*]

*Matt (stubbornly).* I'm going to marry Ellen Douras, with or without a fortune.

*Murtagh Cosgar (passionately).* Boy, your father built this house. He got these lands together. He has a right to see that you and your generations are in the way of keeping them together.

*Matt.* I'll marry Ellen Douras, with or without a fortune.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Marry her, then. Marry Ellen Douras.

*Matt.* Now, Martin, we mustn't let an hour pass without going to her. (*He takes Martin's arm, and they go to the door.*)

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Marry Ellen Douras, I bid you. Break what I have built, scatter what I have put together. That is what all the young will be doing.

[*Ellen Douras comes to the door as Matt and Martin reach it.*]

*Matt.* Ellen ! *[She shrinks back.]*

*Ellen.* It's my father I came to speak to.

*Murtagh Cosgar* (*going to the door, and drawing the bolt from the half-door*). When you come to my house, Ellen Douras, you are welcome within.

*[Ellen comes in.]*

*Ellen.* It's right that I should speak to you all. Matt Cosgar, I am going from here.

*Matt.* Ellen, Ellen, don't be saying that. Don't be thinking of the few words between us. It's all over now. Father agrees to us marrying. Speak, father, and let her hear yourself say it.

*Ellen.* I can't go into a farmer's house.

*Matt.* You said that out of passion. Don't keep your mind on it any longer.

*Ellen.* It's true, it's true. I can't go into a farmer's house. This place is strange to me.

*Matt.* How can you talk like that? I'm always thinking of you.

*Ellen.* I've stayed here long enough. I want my own way ; I want to know the world.

*Matt.* If you go, how will I be living, day after day ? The heart will be gone out of me.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You'll be owning the land, Matt Cosgar.

*Matt* (*passionately*). I've worked on the land all my days. Don't talk to me about it now.

*[Ellen goes to Martin. Murtagh goes up to the door, and then turns and speaks.]*

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Listen to me, Matt Cosgar ; and

you listen too, Ellen Douras. It's a new house you want maybe. This house was built for me and my generations ; but I'll build a new house for you both. It's hard for a man to part with his land before the hour of his death ; and it's hard for a man to break his lands ; but I'll break them, and give a share of land to you.

*Ellen.* You were never friendly to me ; but you have the high spirit, and you deserve a better daughter than I would make. The land and house you offer would be a drag on me. (*She goes to the door.*)

*Matt.* Ellen, what he offers is nothing, after all ; but I care for you. Sure you won't go from me like that ?

*Ellen.* Oh, can't you let me go ? I care for you as much as I can care for anyone. But it's my freedom I want.

*Matt.* Then you're going surely ?

*Ellen.* I am. Good-bye.

[*She goes out, Martin follows her. Matt stands dazed. Murtagh closes the door, then goes and takes Matt's arm, and brings him down.*]

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Be a man. We offered her everything, and she went. There's no knowing what the like of her wants. The men will be in soon, and we'll drink to the new ownership.

*Matt.* Oh, what's the good in talking about that now ? If Ellen was here, we might be talking about it.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* To-morrow you and me might go together. Ay, the bog behind the meadow is well

drained by this, and we might put the plough over it. There will be a fine, deep soil in it, I'm thinking Don't look that way, Matt, my son.

*Matt.* When I meet Ellen Douras again, it's not a farmer's house I'll be offering her, nor life in a country place.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* No one could care for you as I care for you. I know the blood between us, and I know the thoughts I had as I saw each of you grow up.  
[*Matt moves to the door.*]

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Where are you going?

*Matt.* To see the boys that are going away.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Wait till the Fall and I'll give you money to go and come back. Farrell Kavanagh often goes to America. You could go with him.

*Matt.* I'll go by myself, unless Ellen Douras comes now. The creamery owes me money for the carting and I'll get it.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Then go. Good-bye to you, Matt Cosgar.

*Matt.* Good-bye to you. (*He goes out. Murtagh stands, then moves about vaguely.*)

*Murtagh Cosgar.* The floor swept, the hearth tidied. It's a queer end to it all. Twenty years I bid them offer. Twenty years, twenty years!

[*Martin comes back.*]

*Murtagh Cosgar.* The men will be coming back.

*Martin Douras.* I suppose they will.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You're a queer fellow, Martin Douras. You went to gaol for some meeting.

*Martin Douras.* Ay.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Them was the stirring times. I can't help but think of you in gaol, and by yourself. What brings you back now?

*Martin Douras.* Ellen told me to go back. I should say something to Matt, I think.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* He went out as you came in.

*Martin Douras.* I'll go in when the house is quiet. I'll have a few prayers to be saying this night.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* I'm going to the fair.

*Martin Douras.* I won't be going to the fair.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Why won't you be going to the fair? Didn't you ask me for a lift? You'll be going with me.

*Martin Douras.* I won't be going, and don't be overbearing me now, Murtagh Cosgar.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* You will be going to the fair, if it was only to be showing that seemly face of yours. (*Going to the door, he calls Sally!*) (*He turns to Martin Douras.*) I've a daughter still, Martin Douras.

*Martin Douras.* You have, and I have a son.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* What would you say to a match between them, Martin Douras?

*Martin Douras.* I have nothing to say again it.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Then a match it will be.

[*Sally enters.*]

*Sally.* If you fed that baste on honey, she'd turn on you. Cabbage I gave her and got into trouble for it, and now she's gone and trampled the bad

potatoes till they're hardly worth the boiling. I'll put the bush in the gap when I'm going out again, father.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Ay. Is that Cornelius Douras that's coming up the path?

*Sally.* O faith it is. I'll get him to give me a hand with the trough.

[*Cornelius enters.*]

*Cornelius.* Well, Murtagh Cosgar, a great and memorial day is ended. May you live long to enjoy the fruits of it. Twenty years on the first term, and the land is ours and our children's. I met the men.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Ours and our children's, ay. We've been making a match between yourself and Sally.

*Cornelius.* Between me and Sally?

*Sally.* Between Cornelius and myself?

*Murtagh Cosgar.* Ay, shake hands on it now.

*Cornelius.* And tell me one thing, Murtagh Cosgar. Is it true that Matt's going to America, and that Ellen will wait for him for a year at the school? I met them together, and they told me that.

*Murtagh Cosgar.* What they say is true, I'm sure. The land is yours and your children's.

*Sally (wiping her hands in her apron).* O Cornelius.

*Cornelius.* Aren't they foolish to be going away like that, father, and we at the mouth of the good times? The men will be coming in soon, and you might say a few words. (*Martin shakes his head.*) Indeed you might, father; they'll expect it of you.

(*Martin shakes his head. Murtagh and Sally try to restrain him.*) "Men of Ballykillduff," you might say, "stay on the land, and you'll be saved body and soul; you'll be saved in the man and in the nation. The nation, men of Ballykillduff, do you ever think of it at all? Do you ever think of the Irish nation that is waiting all this time to be born?"

[*He becomes more excited; he is seen to be struggling with words.*]

CURTAIN.

"THE LAND" was first produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in June, 1905, by The Irish National Theatre Society, under the direction of W. G. Fay, with the following cast :—

|                        |       |                          |
|------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| <i>Murtagh Cosgar,</i> | ..    | W. G. FAY.               |
| <i>Matt,</i>           | .. .. | PROINSIAS MACSIUBHLAIGH. |
| <i>Sally,</i>          | .. .. | SARA ALLGOOD.            |
| <i>Martin Douras,</i>  | .. .. | F. J. FAY.               |
| <i>Cornelius,</i>      | .. .. | ARTHUR SINCLAIR.         |
| <i>Ellen,</i>          | .. .. | MAIRE NI GHARBHAIGH.     |

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